



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000**

IN REPLY REFER TO

OCT 26 1999

**Building Our Future Together
Occasional Thoughts: Organizational Climate**

Dear Chaplain

In my November 1998 letter to the Corps, under Guiding Principles, I listed nine values I consider to be indispensable in our treatment of one another. In this letter, I would like to emphasize three of them:

- Every individual deserves fair and equitable treatment.
- Most people want to succeed.
- Most people have ideas and want to see them used.

In that November 1998 letter, I identified seven goals for our collective ministries. I invite your attention to the following:

- Raise each person's ability to perform effectively.
- Remove barriers to fair and equitable treatment.
- Encourage and support one another in ethical and moral behavior.

Chaplain Corps Culture

With the above thoughts as a foundation, I would like to address our Chaplain Corps culture. By culture I simply mean how chaplains and Religious Program Specialists interact and treat one another as colleagues, peers and team members. At the very least, this is a leadership issue. Although there are many sophisticated survey instruments that can be administered to assess and interpret this aspect of organizational climate, I suggest that local self-assessments may be undertaken by asking the following questions:

- How are we supporting command mission?
- How do we support and contribute to the Command Religious Program?
- Are we working toward common, clearly specified goals?
- Is the focus of all we do squarely based upon our primary customer, Sea Services members?

More personal questions can be asked:

- Do I embody and model respect, trust and loyalty?
- Am I approachable, fair and objective?
- Am I aware of the areas in which I need to grow professionally and spiritually?

In the recent past, we've all read a great deal about a very few cases in which *Discrimination* has become the watchword for virtually every altercation or confrontation. To be sure, every good organization must strive to narrow the gap between high ideals and performance reality. In my three decades of Navy chaplaincy, however, I have observed that instances of institutional discrimination or gross patterns of misconduct are aberrations that draw the corrective scrutiny of the Naval professionals.

The prevalent dynamic that is far more likely to be a cancer in our Corps is when people do not find joy in the workplace. This frequently leads to a deadening of the spirit due to the edge created when chaplains do not manage their differences responsibly or with maturity. It's somewhat ironic that chaplains receive well-deserved credit for enhancing command climates by conducting stress and conflict management courses, only to have an unacceptably high percentage fail to embody these principles and insights—allowing personality conflicts to fester and/or develop into open wounds that seem irreparable over time.

We need to encourage one another. We need to commit ourselves to the development of professional and transactional skills and abilities. We need to cultivate an atmosphere of decency, and these things begin locally. These initiatives require spending time with one another figuring out our expectations, our motivational profiles, and how to maximize, not deplete, our assets in pursuit of common goals.

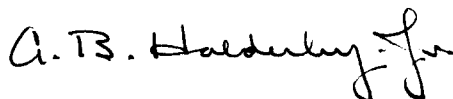
Authentic leadership calls for clarity on ministerial strategies, a noble mission, a compelling vision, and worthwhile values and guiding principles. Authentic leadership stimulates both the intellect and the spirit. When this is accomplished, the music of the heart will translate into harmony in the workplace and the larger organization.

I vividly recall the supervisory guidance given to one of our chaplains a few years ago. The chaplain was told by his line commander, "go out there and find the chaplain/RP with the toughest job in the Navy, and spend a few days with that person." The chaplain who received this tasking indicated that this sage guidance permeated every dimension of his work with others. He reported that he could not draft policy, write and deliver a

sermon, or mentor his subordinates without first asking himself, "How will my action/words affect that person with the toughest job?" In reality, there are times when each one of us qualify as having the toughest job. The question I would like to pose is, "Are we making the job unnecessarily tougher for those who work for and with us?" If anyone can answer "Yes," then he or she has a growth area to address.

Positive, constructive organizational climate and Chaplain Corps culture begins with each of us taking responsibility for our behaviors and attitude. According to recent military retention surveys, chaplains enjoy the extremely high regard of Sea Services members and their families for the religious ministry we provide. Collectively, we rate very high in areas of professional trust and confidence. As professionals in Command Religious Programs, we must endeavor to ensure we are deserving of the trust we receive from our shipmates. I trust that we will continually re-visit and explore the guiding principles I mentioned above in the hope that our chaplain/RP team will continue to grow strong in mutual respect, trust and loyalty. We are called to a bold and noble mission. It requires noble, decent and capable individuals to achieve it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A.B. Holderby, Jr.".

A. B. HOLDERBY, JR.
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chief of Chaplains